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SWEEPING.

WITH careful use a valuable carpet may retain its first fresh beauty very little impaired for many years, while one unlucky sweep may mar it at the "first intention," as the doctors say, and a dingy carpet in turn mars the beauty and harmony of a room in all its appointments.

The cheaper grades of floor covering, being less durable according to quality, are quite as easily damaged by bad management in sweeping.

The prerequisites of a genuine good sweep are first, a properly laid floor covering; second, the proper kind of a broom or brush to work with; and third, a proper regard for the value and appearance of the carpet, together with the intelligence and skill of a good sweeper. In the first place, a carpet to wear satisfactorily should be placed on the floor with the widths all running the same way, stretched evenly, not too tight, over felt-ing made for the purpose, or instead, thick soft paper.

For a fine carpet of any kind we want a light, soft, thick new broom—one made of manilla or fine broom corn. Those who make brooms know best how to select straws. The best brooms are usually sold at the best stores and cost the best prices—the highest being cheap enough, there is no economy in buying low priced brooms. When the trade fails to supply the desired broom it is very easy to have several made to order, the straws to be of the very finest and the handles smooth, long and unpainted. A broom should never be either cut, scalded or doctored by any of the methods prescribed in the housekeeper's pharmacopœia. A cut broom or one much worn cuts and wears the carpet and leaves the dust behind. Scalding a broom is said to toughen it and make it last; a good broom needs no toughening and if properly handled will wear a long time. I have one now that has done special service on one carpet for five years. In the same time dozens of brooms have been worn out in other parts of the house.

Provided with a broom that is perfectly clean, dry, soft and light, the grain of the carpet is to be ascertained. This is done by passing the hand gently up or down the length way of the carpet just as we do with cloth, velvet and satin. Then remove the furniture as much as possible from one width and begin at whichever end will take you the "down way" of the carpet—that is, do not brush so as to raise the pile (the surest way in the world to ruin a carpet); brush with the full broad side of the broom, taking one width at a time.

Hold the broom in a dragging position, so it will *draw* the dust along under it instead of flinging it up in the air. Make short strokes, with a light brisk motion, if necessary go over the same spot several times, always brushing forward. Use the dust pan frequently to prevent accumulations on the carpet, and be careful not to step into a pile of dust and then on to a swept spot.

I have always claimed that sweeping should be done with closed doors and windows, but for those who cannot sweep without raising a dust, it is of vital importance to admit all the outer air possible. The head and ears should be covered and the mouth kept closed, going once in a while to the open door or window for a deep drawn breath of fresh air.

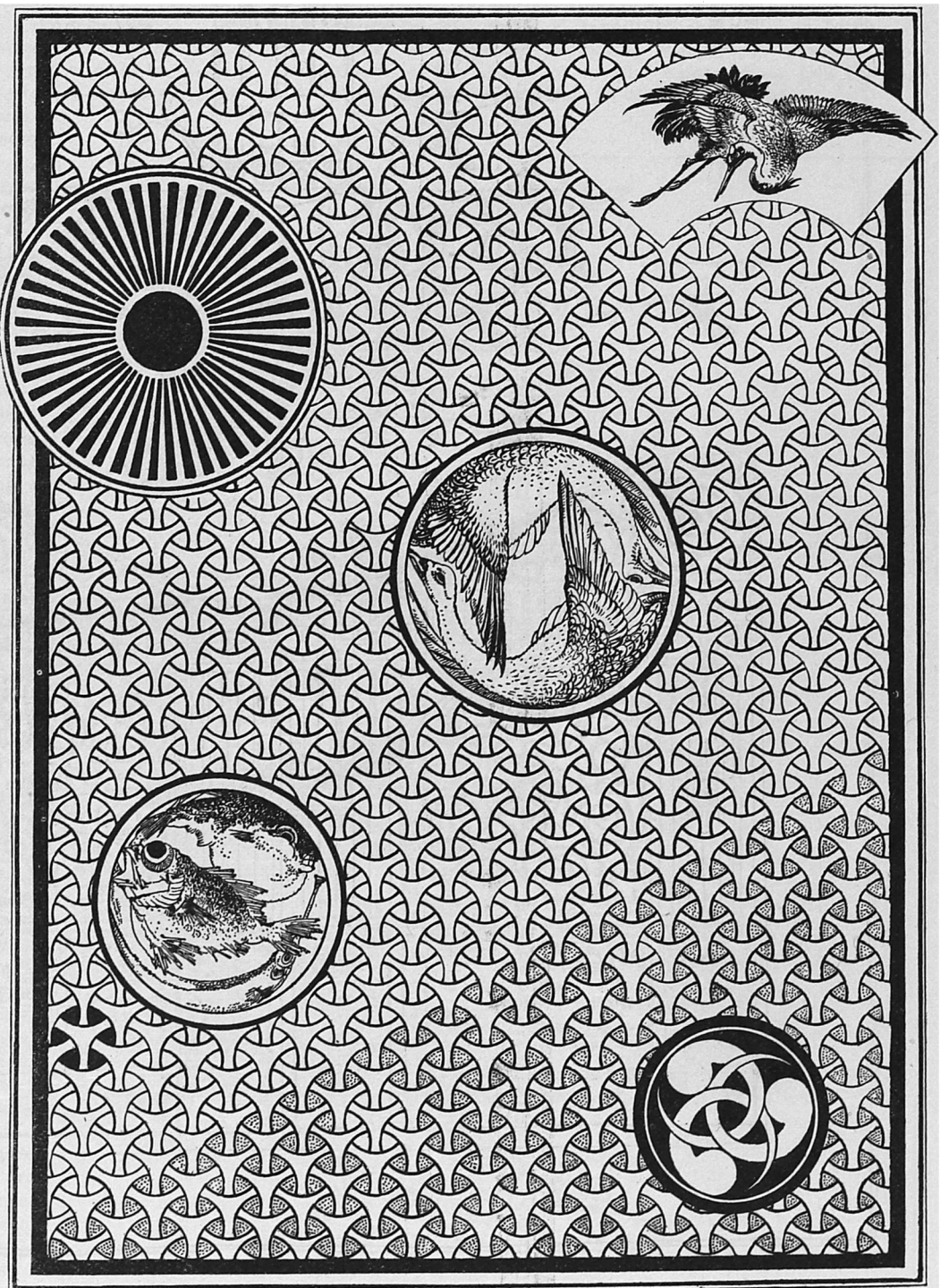
To lay a rug down and sweep it vigorously, "both ways at once" and every other way, or to beat it against the door post, the step, a tree, fence, stone or any hard substance that may happen near, or to hang it on a line and attack it with clubs, like some ferocious creature giving vent to the pent up rage of a life time, is all wrong, and I, for one, would immediately discharge any servant guilty of such willful destruction.

These instructions so far have been for fine clean carpets that really require very little sweeping, but where

there is a much worn carpet and more or less of dust and mud and litter, there is simply an abomination. Better far have a clean bare floor than a "dirty old carpet."

Straw matting is swept crossways with a soft hair brush, never with a corn broom. When soiled and not until then, wipe over with a cloth wrung well out of cold water and slightly salted.

Now one word about a medium for brightening a carpet. There is nothing, positively nothing, better for the purpose than the clean dry broom. Our numerous recipes suggest tea leaves, straw, grass, paper, corn meal, fresh snow, and I don't know what all, but I do know a carpet is all the better without either. Having heard so much about the merits of salt, I determined to try an experiment. I took one piece of handsome velvet carpet, old but clean and fresh looking. I left the piece exposed to the ordinary wear and tear in a room until it came sweeping time. I carefully swept one half of the piece and immediately tacked a large paper over it, then I sprinkled salt *à la mode* over the other half and proceeded to carefully sweep that, covering it also until the room was in order. This I continued for several weeks. At first there appeared no difference in the two halves of the carpet, but after awhile one began to look more shabby and faded than the other: it was the side that had been salted; but immediately after sweeping it would again seem much the brighter. One day a visitor noticed such a difference in the two ends of the strip of carpet that she inquired: "What has happened to your carpet?" I explained that I had been experimenting with salt, but so soaked in brine was her opinion that I failed to convince her that the bright end was the one that had no salt. Nevertheless so it was. The treatment of oil cloths and plain wooden or stone floors will require a chapter of its own.



JAPANESE DECORATIVE DESIGN.